

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants would like to express appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided, for the acknowledgment of Applicants' Claim for Priority and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document, and for the acknowledgment of Applicants' Information Disclosure Statement by return of the Form PTO-1449. Applicants also note that the Examiner has not indicated that the drawings have been approved by the Official Draftsperson on a Form PTO-948. The Examiner is thus requested to indicate that Applicant's drawings are acceptable in the next Official Action.

Upon entry of the above amendment, claims 1 and 3 will have been amended and claims 2 and 5 will have been canceled. Accordingly, claims 1, 3, 4, and 6-12 are currently pending. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and allowance of claims 1, 3, 4, and 6-12 in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-5 and 10-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over FUNAHASHI et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,304,727) in view of KONNO et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,157,781). The Examiner takes the position that the FUNAHASHI et al. patent discloses a photographing lens block G1, G2, G3, a finder block 1, a lens barrel with a plurality of guide shaft members 2a, 2b, and a casing 1 having a plurality of holes receiving the guide shaft members, but fails to disclose a single reflex digital camera. The

Examiner contends that it would have been obvious to provide the system of FUNAHASHI et al. in a single reflex camera as taught by KONNO et al., to use the device for both film and digital cameras.

Although Applicants do not necessarily agree with the Examiner's rejection of claims 1 and 3 on this ground, nevertheless, Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 3 to clearly obviate the above noted ground of rejection in order to expedite prosecution of the present application. In this regard, Applicants note that FUNAHASHI et al. and KONNO et al. fail to teach or suggest the subject matter claimed in amended claims 1 and 3. In particular, claim 1, as amended, sets forth a lens unit structure including, inter alia, "a lens barrel having a plurality of guide shaft members extending in parallel with an optical axis of said photographing lens block, proximal ends of said plurality of guide shaft members being secured to said lens barrel and distal ends of said plurality of guide shaft members projecting out of said photographing lens block", "wherein said photographing lens block comprises an integrally formed unit that is separable from said finder block", a "casing having a plurality of holes respectively receiving said distal ends of said plurality of guide shaft members provided on said lens barrel", and "wherein said plurality of guide shaft members regulate a positional relationship of an optical axis of said photographing lens block with respect to an optical axis of said finder block". Claim 3, as amended, sets forth a lens unit structure including, inter alia, "a lens barrel having a first lens group and a plurality of guide shaft

members extending in parallel with an optical axis of said first lens group, distal ends of said plurality of guide shaft members projecting out of said photographing lens block”, “wherein said photographing lens block comprises an integrally formed unit that is separable from said finder block”, a “casing having a plurality of holes respectively receiving said distal ends of said plurality of guide shaft members provided on said lens barrel”, and “wherein an optical alignment of said photographing lens block and said finder block are regulated by inserting said distal ends of said plurality of guide shaft members in said plurality of holes, respectively”.

In the present invention, the photographing lens block 18 is assembled by fixing the lens barrel cover 9 to the lens barrel 15 after the focusing frame 2a and the zoom lens frame 61 are installed therein. Accordingly, the photographing lens block 18 and the finder block 11 are *separately* assembled. Then, after the photographing lens block 18 and the finder block 11 are each separately assembled, the assembled photographing lens block 18 and the assembled finder block 11 are assembled into the lens unit 1. Accordingly, the present invention includes a photographing lens block that is an integrally formed unit. Further, after the photographing lens block 18 and the finder block 11 are each separately assembled, the ends of the guide shafts 3, 4 are inserted into the through holes 110a, 111a formed on the finder block 11, and then the lens barrel cover 9 is fixed on the finder block 11 by screws. Accordingly, the present invention includes a photographing lens block that is separable

from the finder block. See particularly figure 1 and Applicants' specification, page 6, line 22 through page 7, line 3; and page 12, line 3 through page 14, line 11.

The FUNAHASHI et al. device includes objective lens elements G1, G2, G3, a finder LCD 12, a finder mount 1, guide shafts 2a, 2b provided on the finder mount 1, and an objective prism 11, an eyepiece prism 13, and an eyepiece lens 14 provided in the finder mount 1. As described in the FUNAHASHI et al. patent, the objective lens element G1 is "bonded and fixed" to the finder mount 1 with a diaphragm therebetween (column 2, lines 49-52). Thus, the photographing lens block of the FUNAHASHI et al. device must be divided into a plurality of elements when it is separated from the finder block. See particularly column 2, line 49 through column 3, line 6 of FUNAHASHI et al. Accordingly, the FUNAHASHI et al. device does not include a photographing lens block that comprises "an integrally formed unit that is separable from said finder block", as set forth in amended claims 1 and 3.

Moreover, in the FUNAHASHI et al. patent, the guide shafts 2a, 2b are not used for both (1) positioning the lens group and (2) positioning an integrally formed photographing lens block against a finder block when the photographing lens block is mounted on the finder block. Accordingly, the FUNAHASHI et al. device does not include an integrally formed photographing lens block separable from a finder block, "wherein said plurality of guide shaft members regulate a positional relationship of an optical axis of said photographing lens

block with respect to an optical axis of said finder block”, as set forth in claim 1, as amended.

Further, the FUNAHASHI et al. device does not include an integrally formed photographing lens block separable from a finder block, “wherein an optical alignment of said photographing lens block and said finder block are regulated by inserting said distal ends of said plurality of guide shaft members in said plurality of holes, respectively”, as set forth in claim 3, as amended.

The KONNO et al. patent is directed to an SLR digital camera. The camera disclosed by the KONNO et al. patent includes a lens barrel 6 and a camera body 1 in which a finder block and an image sensor 2 are held. The lens barrel of KONNO et al. is a unit detachably mounted on the camera body. See particularly figure 1. However, KONNO et al. fails to teach or suggest any structures that position the lens barrel against the camera body. Therefore, KONNO et al. fails to teach or suggest an integrally formed photographing lens block separable from a finder block, and guide shaft members that “regulate a positional relationship of an optical axis of said photographing lens block with respect to an optical axis of said finder block”, as set forth in claim 1, as amended. Also, KONNO et al. fails to teach or suggest an integrally formed photographing lens block separable from a finder block, in which “optical alignment of said photographing lens block and said finder block are regulated by inserting said distal ends of said plurality of guide shaft members in said plurality of holes, respectively”, as set forth in claim 3, as amended. In other words, KONNO

et al. fails to teach or suggest guide shafts that are used for both (1) positioning the lens group and (2) positioning an integrally formed photographing lens block against a finder block when the photographing lens block is mounted on the finder block. Accordingly, the KONNO et al. patent fails to cure the deficiencies of the FUNAHASHI et al. device, and even assuming, arguendo, that the teachings of FUNAHASHI et al. and KONNO et al. have been properly combined, Applicants' claimed lens unit structure would not have resulted from the combined teachings thereof.

Further, there is nothing in the cited prior art that would lead one of ordinary skill in the art to make the modification suggested by the Examiner in the rejection of claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over FUNAHASHI et al. in view of KONNO et al.. Thus, the only reason to combine the teachings of FUNAHASHI et al. and KONNO et al. results from a review of Applicants' disclosure and the application of impermissible hindsight. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over FUNAHASHI et al. in view of KONNO et al. is improper for all the above reasons and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Claims 2 and 5 have been canceled. Accordingly, in view of the noted amendments and remarks, it is believed that the rejection of claims 2 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is now moot.

Applicants submit that dependent claims 4 and 6-12, which are at least patentable due to their dependency from claim 3 for the reasons noted above, recite additional features of the invention and are also separately patentable over the prior art of record based on the additionally recited features.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, and an early indication of the allowance of claims 1, 3, 4, and 6-12.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the present amendment is proper and that none of the references of record, considered alone or in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious Applicants' invention as recited in claims 1, 3, 4, and 6-12. The applied references of record have been discussed and distinguished, while significant claimed features of the present invention have been pointed out.

Accordingly, consideration of the present amendment, reconsideration of the outstanding Official Action, and allowance of the present amendment and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so.

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Applicants note that this amendment is being made to advance prosecution of the application to allowance, and should not be considered as surrendering equivalents of the territory between the claims prior to the present amendment and the amended claims.

Should there be any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below listed number.

Respectfully submitted,
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